

Allison Mock is a senior at Kempner High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: Why is it important to participate in the political process?

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve;" this is especially true in our nation today. America has become apathetic. We no longer look for ways to actively participate in our own government. Voting in minor elections, writing letters to congressmen, and attending city council meetings to stay updated have become things of the past. In essence, we have forgotten how to be involved in the political process. This is a natural feature of our country's aging. The majority of the population does not remember that voting is a privilege, not a guarantee. We dismiss that there ever was a time when having your voice heard was almost impossible and advocating controversial opinions dangerous. The Founders of our nation and millions of soldiers died so we would never again see such a time, their sacrifices should never be taken lightly. Those heroes dreamed of a country where the people determined what the future would look like, and now we are here. However, the hard work is far from over. While the Constitution provides the foundation to build our government upon, the most important work is done by the people we elect. Our republic should be reinvented with each new generation. This makes it even more important for the majority to participate in the political process. Our system is currently lacking people to balance out the radical activists and conversely, push forward those who have stagnated in their policy. The recent retirement of leaders like Senator Stowe is compelling evidence that even leaders are frustrated by the polarization of the politically active members of society. We need everyone to participate to fully deserve a good government.

An ideal spot to start these changes would be in high schools. Although Government classes lightly touch on the importance of voting, most kids have no idea how crucial it is. A self-fulfilling prophecy occurs in their political lives; society does not expect them to care until they are older, and as a result, they don't think they need to. However, if the curriculum included more of an emphasis on not only the importance of voting, but a detailed explanation of what each party stands for and how to discern for themselves how they would like to vote, students would respond. Lists of election dates could be distributed to students and posted online. By involving social media we could reach even more of this demographic. Twitter, Facebook, my space could all have reminders to vote, information about candidates and their issues, and ways to get involved in the community it would be difficult. A similar campaign was tried in the early 2000s, but was abandoned when it did not prove imme-

diately effective. While we have more social media now, allowing the message to further penetrate, what we really need is perseverance from our leaders. We must continue to try and reach this crucial age group, because they too deserve a chance to reshape the republic and make this country even greater.

#### HONORING NAZARETH COLLEGE ON ITS DESIGNATION AS MILITARY FRIENDLY

**HON. TOM REED**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 7, 2012*

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nazareth College, which I am proud to represent as part of the 29th District of the great state of New York. Nazareth College was recently recognized by the Military Advanced Education Journal as military friendly, following a concerted effort to help veteran students transition to academia.

Beginning with the hiring of Jeremy Bagley as coordinator of veteran student enrollment, Nazareth College has worked to provide more services and offerings to its veteran students. By working with the Rochester Veterans Outreach Center, Nazareth College has provided access to creative arts therapy and therapists and developed a program to train faculty and staff to help respond to veterans' needs. When the Veterans Outreach Center was forced to lay off employees due to financial pressures, Nazareth College provided oversight of its on-site clinical staff to help offset the impact of cuts to vital programs. Nazareth College continues to offer internships pairing veterans with veteran mentors as part of a broad strategy to help veteran students better handle the transition from military service to academia.

In recognition of this concerted effort by Nazareth College and in light of the rigorous criteria used by the Military Advanced Education Journal in awarding this distinction, I am pleased to recognize Nazareth College for their designation as military friendly.

ESSAY BY BAILEY ARLINGHAUS

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 7, 2012*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in

the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great Nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Bailey Arlinghaus is a senior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

Government is crucial in our lives. Without government, we would all be barbarically fighting for the limited amount of resources we have available. Government helps our society function the way it is, but just like anything else, too much of a good thing can be bad. Therefore, government intervention should be limited on our lives. Too much government control can lead to dictatorships or the government playing a "Big Brother" kind of role. This "Big Brother" type of rule would be bad in the long run because the people would lose faith in the government, so the citizens would try to find any way they can to overthrow the government. Government's role should be to help society but within its boundaries set by society. Crossing these boundaries can lead to too much government intervention in our society. I think the boundary that the government should never cross would be the boundary of the government tracking your every move and everything you do. The government's main role should be to lay down the expectations, make laws that people should follow, help society when needed, but don't interfere in society so much that it makes the people dependent on the government to run effectively. The government's role is important to how this society functions. Therefore, the government needs to let society work in a way so that it isn't making the society completely dependent on them. Every individual should be able to speak their mind, without control, to promote new ideas that better society. That can only happen with a limited government role, to make society work on its own. The government should do nothing except give a little push to society every now and then to keep it running. With this, the government isn't running our everyday lives but just helping us to be able to run it ourselves. We should all follow the government's laws but, at the same time, be able to have a mind of our own. To conclude, the government shouldn't play a huge role in our every day lives, rather a limited one, so we can be more effective on our own and be able to think for ourselves.